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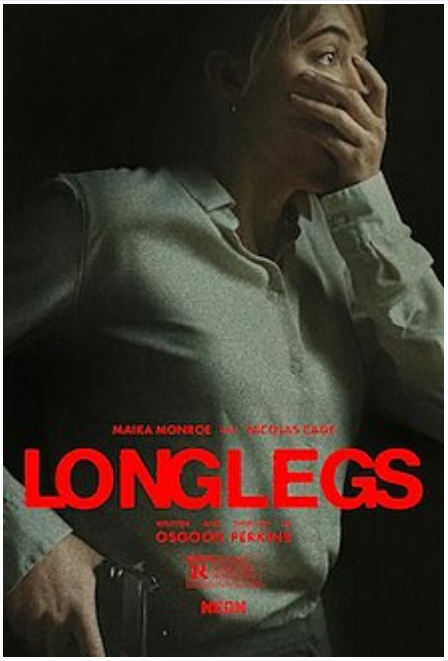
Longlegs

Longlegs	
 Theatrical release poster	
Directed by	Osgood Perkins
Written by	Osgood Perkins
Produced by	Dan Kagan Brian Kavanaugh-Jones Nicolas Cage Dave Caplan Chris Ferguson
Starring	Maika Monroe Blair Underwood Alicia Witt Nicolas Cage
Cinematography	Andrés Arochi Tinajero
Edited by	Greg Ng Graham Fortin
Music by	Zilgi

Production companies	C2 Motion Picture Group Traffic. Range Oddfellows Saturn Films
Distributed by	Neon
Release date	July 12, 2024
Running time	101 minutes[1]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	<$10 million[2]
Box office	$103.5 million[3][4]

Longlegs is a 2024 American horror-thriller film written and directed by Osgood Perkins, and starring Maika Monroe, Nicolas Cage, Blair Underwood, and Alicia Witt. Set in the 1990s, it follows an FBI agent tasked with tracking down an occultist serial killer responsible for murdering multiple families throughout the state of Oregon, without having been physically present in the crimes. Cage also served as a producer on the film through his Saturn Films production company.

Longlegs was released in the United States by Neon on July 12, 2024. It received critical acclaim and grossed $103.5 million worldwide, becoming Neon's highest-grossing film to date domestically, as well as the highest-grossing independent film of the year.[5]

Plot

In 1974 Oregon, a young girl with a Polaroid camera follows a mysterious voice and encounters an erratic man in pale makeup.

In the 1990s, FBI agent Lee Harker, who exhibits possible clairvoyance, is assigned by her supervisor William Carter to a case involving a series of murder–suicides in Oregon. Each case involves a father killing his family and himself, leaving behind a letter with Satanic coding signed "Longlegs", whose handwriting belongs to none of the family members. Lee discovers that each family had a 9-year-old daughter born on the 14th of the month, the murders all occurred within six days before or after the birthday itself, and the murders form an occult triangle symbol on a calendar, with one date missing. While talking to her mother Ruth, Lee receives a coded birthday card from Longlegs, warning her that revealing the source of the code will lead to her mother's murder.

Following a clue, Lee and Carter find a doll with a high-energy metal orb inside. After visiting a mental hospital to question Carrie, the sole survivor of Longlegs's attacks, who was visited previously by someone using Lee's name, Carter suspects Lee's connection to Longlegs. Discovering that Ruth had filed a police report of an intruder approaching Lee on her ninth birthday, Carter encourages Lee to talk to her. Ruth directs Lee to childhood belongings, where she finds a Polaroid of the pale-faced man, revealing Longlegs to be the man who had visited a young Lee on her birthday. Lee submits the photo, leading to

Longlegs's arrest. Realizing the missing date is that day, Lee fears an accomplice will commit another murder. In the interrogation room, Longlegs claims to serve "the man downstairs" and hints at Ruth's involvement before killing himself. Lee is soon informed that Carrie has committed suicide.

Agent Browning drives Lee to her mother's home, where Lee witnesses Ruth murder Browning with a shotgun. Ruth then destroys a doll resembling young Lee, causing Lee to lose consciousness. Lee sees that Ruth has been Longlegs's accomplice since Lee's childhood. Longlegs forced Ruth to choose between her daughter's death and his bidding, leading her to comply and spare Lee. Longlegs has lived in the Harker basement, creating Satanic dolls that Ruth, posing as a nun, delivered to households, influencing the patriarchs to commit familicide. Lee's doll blocked her memories of Longlegs while influencing her with his magic.

Lee awakens in the basement and hears a demonic voice on the phone warning her about William's daughter Ruby's ninth birthday party, which had been scheduled for that day. Lee rushes to save the Carters, whose deaths would complete Longlegs's triangle. She finds the family already possessed, with Ruth having delivered the doll. After William kills his wife Anna, Lee shoots him to protect Ruby. Ruth attacks with a dagger, forcing Lee to kill her. Lee tries to destroy the doll but her gun does not discharge. She tells Ruby they need to leave but remains staring at the doll.

Cast

- Maika Monroe as Lee Harker, an FBI agent assigned to the Longlegs case
  - Lauren Acala as young Lee
- Nicolas Cage as Longlegs, an elusive serial killer whose real name is Dale Kobble[6]
- Blair Underwood as Agent Carter, one of Lee's superiors
- Alicia Witt as Ruth Harker, Lee's religious mother
- Michelle Choi-Lee as Agent Browning, one of Lee's superiors
- Dakota Daulby as Agent Fisk, Lee's partner
- Kiernan Shipka as Carrie Anne Camera, Longlegs's only known survivor
  - Maila Hosie as young Carrie
- Jason Day as Father Camera
- Lisa Chandler as Mother Camera
- Ava Kelders as Ruby Carter, William Carter's daughter
- Carmel Amit as Anna Carter, William Carter's wife
- Peter Bryant as a senior FBI agent

Maika Monroe stars as Lee Harker.

Production

The film was announced in November 2022, with Osgood Perkins as writer and director.[7] He drew inspiration from several sources; the plot device of the evil dolls that cause fathers to murder their families was loosely inspired by the killing of JonBenét Ramsey: "The murder took place approaching Christmas, and one present that the parents had gotten for JonBenét was a life-size replica doll of herself,

wearing one of her pageant dresses. It was in a cardboard box in the basement, 15 feet from where she was killed, and there was something so insane about that, I'd cataloged it away."[8] In February 2023, Nicolas Cage and Maika Monroe came on board to star, with Cage also producing under his Saturn Films banner.[9][10] In March, Alicia Witt and Blair Underwood were announced as part of the cast.[11]

Dave Caplan's C2 Motion Picture Group financed the film for under $10 million.[2] Principal photography was scheduled to take place in Vancouver from January 16 to February 23, 2023.[12][10]

Music

The film's soundtrack was conceived by Zilgi, a pseudonym for Elvis Perkins (the brother of the film's director),[13] credited as composer of the score compositions on the digital soundtrack album.[14] There were contributing tracks by sound designer Eugenio Battagila and Melody Carrillo with Elizabeth Wight. The soundtrack was released on July 12, 2024 on streaming platforms and on vinyl.[15]

Marketing

Neon utilized guerilla marketing tactics similar to those that led to the box office success of *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), building speculation through clips, images, and coded messages that used symbology created for the film and concealed Cage's look as Longlegs.[16] Eleven promotional videos were uploaded to YouTube leading up to release, the first appearing in January 2024, which did not mention the film's title until February; together, the videos accumulated 30 million views.[2][17][18] A trailer was attached to every horror film released in theaters since January 2024.[2]

Additional content included a billboard (with no mention of the title) that featured a phone number for pre-recorded messages from the film's antagonist,[19] and a paid advertisement featuring a cipher that was published in the *Seattle Times* on June 14, a reference to the Zodiac Killer, that directed readers to an in-universe website detailing murders committed in the film.[20] The week of the film's release, Neon released a clip allegedly of Monroe's heartrate when she first saw Cage's character.[21] Following the film's theatrical premiere, Neon released another promotional spot highlighting hidden appearances of the devil that recur in the backgrounds of the film.[22] According to Perkins, there are 15 appearances of the devil in the film which are not readily noticeable.[23]

Perkins credited Neon for the film's marketing, saying the studio "asked me early on, 'Do we have your permission to kind of go nuts?' And I said, 'What else are we doing here? Go for it. Do your thing.' "[24] The film's total marketing budget was under $10 million, focusing on using digital content over traditional television ads.[2]

Release

In February 2023, Neon acquired the film's North American rights at the European Film Market.[25] The film had a screening at Los Angeles's Beyond Fest on May 31, 2024.[26] *Longlegs* premiered at The Egyptian Theatre Hollywood in Los Angeles on July 8, 2024.[27]

Longlegs held several special screenings across the United States throughout July 8-13, 2024.[28] This also included a 'parent-free' RSVP screening at the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema in Brooklyn, New York on July 12, 2024.[2] It was released in North America and the United Kingdom on July 12, 2024.[10][29]

Home media

Longlegs was released on VOD on August 23, 2024. The 4K Ultra HD, Blu-ray, and DVD is scheduled to be released on September 24, 2024.[30][4]

Reception

Box office

As of September 5, 2024, *Longlegs* has grossed $74 million in the United States and Canada, and $29.5 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of $103.5 million.[3][4]

In the United States and Canada, *Longlegs* was released alongside *Fly Me to the Moon*, and was projected to gross $7–9 million from 2,510 theaters in its opening weekend.[31] After making $10 million on its first day (including $3 million from Thursday night previews, both records for Neon), weekend estimates were raised to $20–23 million.[32] It went on to debut to $22.4 million, finishing second at the box office behind holdover *Despicable Me 4*.[33] The opening marked the best opening weekend for Neon and the biggest total for an original 2024 horror film. It was Monroe's best domestic opening as lead (excluding 2016's *Independence Day: Resurgence*, for which she was billed) and Cage's first live-action film to open above $20 million since *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance* in 2012.[2] In its second weekend, the film made $12 million, a drop of 46.6% to finish in fourth.[34][35] In its third weekend, it became Neon's highest-grossing film after surpassing their earnings for 2019's *Parasite* ($53.37 million) and added $6.8 million.[36][37] On August 16, 2024, the film had surpassed $100 million worldwide, making it the highest-grossing independent film of the year to-date.[38]

Critical response

The film premiered to critical acclaim.[a] On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 85% of 302 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.5/10. The website's consensus reads: "Saturated in disquieting mood while leveraging a nightmarishly gonzo performance by Nicolas Cage, *Longlegs* is a satanic horror that effectively instills panic."[44] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 77 out of 100, based on 52 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.[45] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "C+" on an A+ to F scale, while those polled by PostTrak gave it a 70% overall positive score, with an average 3 out of 5 stars.[46]

David Rooney writing for *The Hollywood Reporter* praised the film, saying, "It might be argued that he stirs too many elements into the mix here — crime procedural, occult mystery, mind manipulation, Satanic worship, scary dolls, a Faustian bargain and a 'nun' not fit for any convent. But *Longlegs* is [Perkins'] most fully realized and relentlessly effective film to date".[47] Bob Strauss of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, "Most impressive is how Perkins blends psychological and supernatural horror in a manner not quite seen before. *Longlegs* is a conjuring of dark, poetic cinema where the devil is definitely

in the details".[48] *Vanity Fair*'s Richard Lawson expressed disappointment in the film, writing "*Longlegs* is stylish but vacuous, a prettily foreboding picture with nothing behind it. As Hannibal Lecter might say, it's a well scrubbed, hustling rube with a little taste".[49]

J. Hurtado of Screen Anarchy declared *Longlegs* "a masterpiece; an unholy, horrifying confluence of high art and anxiety, a film in which every frame is a nightmare, and it's beautiful".[50] Writing for Bloody Disgusting, Meagan Navarro praised *Longlegs*' performances and atmosphere, concluding, "*Longlegs* is as stylish as it is timeless, dripping with claustrophobic dread and rot."[51] Bill Bria of */Film* called *Longlegs* "the most terrifying horror movie of 2024," noting the film's "rock n' roll spirit".[52]

Critics praised Nicolas Cage's performance.

See also

- List of horror films of 2024

Notes

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External links

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